



# State of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

November 9, 2007

Dear District Administrator:

As we begin the 2007-08 school year, the Student Achievement Guarantee in Education (SAGE) program is entering its eleventh year. This important resource was created to ensure improved student achievement through the implementation of four school improvement strategies:

- reducing class sizes to no more than 15:1 in grades K-3;
- extending learning opportunities and increased collaboration between schools and their communities by extending school hours;
- implementing a rigorous curriculum focusing on academic achievement; and
- improving professional development.

During the 2006-07 school year, 480 schools participated in SAGE serving approximately 90,000 K-3 pupils statewide. Schools participating in the SAGE program perform higher on the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Exam than schools not participating in SAGE with similar poverty. We know this program works! Additionally, the SAGE program received an increase in the biennial budget of \$13.3 million to provide \$2,250 per eligible student.

Recently, the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) received several requests for information and clarification in relation to the SAGE class size requirement. The intent of this correspondence is to clarify the class size requirement.

State law requires schools in the SAGE program to maintain class sizes of 15:1 in grades K-3. SAGE funding is intended to supplement, not supplant, the local cost of maintaining these class sizes. This requires a significant local commitment to the educational value of small class sizes including the allocation of local and federal funds necessary to meet the SAGE class size requirement.

Given the current economic pressures, as well as classroom space limitations facing many schools, some SAGE class sizes may have gradually increased over time. If your district is not in compliance with the class size requirement, your district must submit a SAGE waiver request to the DPI. This also includes schools that reduce class sizes in core subject areas only (reading/language arts and mathematics).

District Administrator

Page 2

November 9, 2007

If a waiver is granted, it provides *temporary* flexibility to a school to meet the class size requirement of the SAGE law. Each waiver request is considered on a case-by-case basis. Relevant factors to be considered may include the school's poverty rate, student achievement trends, the district's long-range plan to ensure class size compliance, utilization of SAGE aid, space issues, and other relevant special circumstances. Staff members from the DPI are available to work with school and district officials to help in the development of your district's waiver application and long-range plan. For more information about the SAGE waiver, including the application process, please visit: <http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/sage/index.html>.

Thank you for all you do to support the achievement and success of your students. If you have further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Shelly Greller at (608) 266-2489 or [rachelle.greller@dpi.state.wi.us](mailto:rachelle.greller@dpi.state.wi.us).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Margaret Planner".

Margaret Planner, Ph.D.  
Assistant State Superintendent  
Division for Reading and Student Achievement

MP:sjb

c: Anthony S. Evers, Deputy State Superintendent  
SAGE School Principal